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TOP DERBY, OAKS CONTENDERS EPICENTER, ECHO ZULU TUNE UP FOR FIRST WEEKEND IN MAY

UAE Derby Winner Crown Pride Works Four Furlongs in :49.20 for 'Run for the Roses'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (Sunday, April 24, 2022) – With less than two weeks remaining until the \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (Grade I) and \$1.25 million Longines Kentucky Oaks, top contenders **Epicenter** (six furlongs, 1:12.20) and **Echo Zulu** (six furlongs, 1:11.80) had their most serious workouts prior to the first weekend in May.

Along with Derby contender Epicenter, **Teruya Yoshida's** UAE Derby (GII) winner **Crown Pride (JPN)** had another tune-up for the "Run for the Roses" and breezed a half-mile in :49.20.

L and N Racing and **Winchell Thoroughbreds'** undefeated filly Echo Zulu was the first of Hall of Fame trainer **Steve Asmussen's** duo to work. The daughter of Gun Runner breezed with exercise rider **Wilson Fabian** in the saddle. The duo broke to the inside of regular workmate **King Ottoman**, who was ridden by former jockey **Eddie Martin Jr.** Echo Zulu worked through eighth-mile fractions of :12.20, :23.80, :35.60 and :47.40. She galloped out seven furlongs in 1:25.20, according to Churchill Downs clocker **John Nichols**.

In Asmussen's next set of horses, Epicenter, with Fabian in the irons, worked to the outside of **Gun It** and Martin through splits of :13, :24.40, :35.80 and :47.20. Epicenter galloped out seven furlongs in 1:26.20 and was up one-mile in 1:41.

"We're so happy the weather has cooperated on our scheduled work days. The racetrack is in great shape this morning," Asmussen said after he arrived in Louisville following an eight-hour overnight drive from Oaklawn Park. "These were the most significant works for us. We're following a pattern that we're very comfortable with. I love the rhythm these horses are in. Both of these horses have kept their same workmates from New Orleans this winter. I'm unbelievably appreciative of the job Wilson and Eddie have done helping get them to this point.

"They've both started out as tremendous prospects and individuals. We're aiming with incremental improvement to not take too big of a leap forward. So everything is a building block to success. Since they have arrived here at Churchill that trend has continued. I was so excited with Echo Zulu's first work here."

Epicenter and Echo Zulu completed the \$1 million TwinSpires.com Louisiana Derby (GII) and \$400,000 Fair Grounds Oaks (GII) double in late March.

Asmussen, who is North America's all-time leading trainer in wins, has made 23 starts in the Kentucky Derby but has failed to win the 1 1/4-mile event. His trainees have finished second and third, twice each, in the Kentucky Derby. His last starter to hit the board was **Lookin At Lee**, who finished second in 2017. Asmussen also finished third in 2016 with **Gun Runner**, second in 2011 with **Nehro** and third in 2007 with **Curlin**.

"I literally know what it feels like to win the Derby," Asmussen said of Nehro. "I didn't see **Animal Kingdom** coming down the center of the track that day. With Lookin At Lee, when **Corey (Lanerrie)** cut the corner with him and the acceleration he showed going by tired horses, it just looked like he was going fast enough to win the Derby. **Always Dreaming** had enough to hold him off. The visuals of those moments were goosebump exciting. I've got 23 different feelings on the Derby but very vividly remember Nehro and Lookin At Lee.

"For Curlin's Derby, I never thought that he'd get beat. The walkover for his Derby felt like it took three strides but the walk back felt like it was the Sahara Desert. He went to the Test Barn after the race with **Zanjero** (who finished 12th) and Zanejero was blowing hard. Curlin came out of the test barn and was his strong, usual self. He had enough ability but wasn't meant to be."

Epicenter and Echo Zulu are likely to head back to the track Tuesday.

At 7:30 a.m., Crown Pride (JPN) worked a half-mile from the three-furlong pole through consistent fractions of :12.40, :24.80 and :37.20. He galloped out five furlongs in 1:01.40. Trainer **Koichi Shintani** is scheduled to arrive in Louisville on May 1 and will be in attendance at the post position draw Monday, May 2.

In other Derby-related news, Asmussen removed Gotham (GIII) winner **Morello** from Derby consideration because the colt has a foot issue. Also, **Jeff Drown's** Blue Grass (GI) winner **Zandon** arrived at Churchill Downs on Sunday morning. He is stabled with several other stablemates in Barn 25.

Florida Derby (GI) winner **White Abarrio** is slated to have his final training in Florida through Sunday, May 1 and arrive in **Saffie Joseph's** Barn 10 by Monday, May 2. **Simplification**, who finished third to White Abarrio in the Florida Derby, is scheduled to arrive one day prior for trainer **Antonio Sano**.

DOWN THE STRETCH – Sunday was the first day of turf training from Churchill Downs on the new \$10 million turf course. Pending inclement weather, the first turf races are scheduled on Saturday for Opening Night of the Spring Meet. ... Monday will start the complete Kentucky Derby/Oaks news updates. Derby Weeks stakes probables will be listed then. ... Opening Night of the Churchill Downs Spring Meet is Saturday. The theme is "Style Under the Stars." For more information and to purchase tickets, visit www.KentuckyDerbyWeek.com.

DAWN AT THE DOWNS: DERBY, OAKS MORNING WORKOUTS OPEN TO PUBLIC – Churchill Downs will be open free-of-charge daily from 7-10 a.m. through Wednesday, May 4 so guests can watch the nation's top 3-year-old Thoroughbreds train toward their engagements in this year's Kentucky Derby and Kentucky Oaks.

Horses train on Churchill Downs' main track daily from 5:15-10 a.m. with an exclusive training window only for Derby and Oaks participants from 7:30-7:45 a.m. following the 7-7:30 a.m. renovation break.

Those horses are identified by special saddle towels which include their names: yellow saddle towels for Derby horses and pink saddle towels for Oaks contenders.

Kentucky Derby Morning Works presented by TwinSpires.com will begin Monday and air on www.kentuckyderby.com/works, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Fans in attendance will be able to watch the show on the track's Big Board and infield televisions.

Guests can enter Churchill Downs through the Paddock Gate and should park for free in the nearby White Lot for convenient entry. Guests will be directed to Sections 115-117 to watch the morning workouts.

No outside food and beverage is allowed. Churchill Downs' Paddock Grill will be open each morning with breakfast food and beverage options.

Also, the Churchill Downs Store will be open daily featuring all of the best official race merchandise, collectibles, drinkwear, party supplies, gifts, apparel and gear for men and women in advance of the Kentucky Derby.

On Sunday, May 1 and Monday, May 2, fans can enjoy a premium breakfast in Millionaires Row or the Stakes Room for Dawn at the Downs. Tickets start at \$41 and can be purchased on www.KentuckyDerby.com/tickets.

The 148th runnings of the \$1.25 Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I) and \$3 million Kentucky Derby presented by Woodford Reserve (GI) will be held Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7, respectively. Opening Night of Derby Week and the 44-day Spring Meet is Saturday, April 30.

KENTUCKY DERBY MORNING WORKS PROGRAM AIRS MONDAY – Former leading jockey **Rosie Napravnik**, a two-time winner of the Longines Kentucky Oaks (Grade I), along with the voice of the Kentucky Derby, **Travis Stone**, join host **Joe Kristufek** as the featured analysts on the Kentucky Derby Morning Works presented by TwinSpires.com for the 11-day online broadcast that begins Monday.

The one-hour program will be streamed live on KentuckyDerby.com/works from 7-8 a.m. (all times Eastern) starting Monday and will feature the 15-minute exclusive training period for Kentucky Derby and Oaks contenders from 7:30-7:45 a.m. Fans can also watch the broadcast across several of the Kentucky Derby social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Napravnik's first appearance on the broadcast will be April 29 while Stone will be on-set April 27-28. A wide array of other experts will lead fans through the show including TwinSpires.com handicappers **James Scully**, **Scott Shapiro** and **Brandon Stauble**.

Fans will be invited to join in the discussion using the hashtag **#KyDerby**.

ABOUT CHURCHILL DOWNS RACETRACK

Churchill Downs Racetrack ("CDRT"), the world's most legendary racetrack, has been the home of The Kentucky Derby, the longest continually held annual sporting event in the United States, since 1875. Located in Louisville, CDRT features a series of themed race days during Derby Week, including the Kentucky Oaks, and conducts Thoroughbred horse racing during three race meets in the Spring, September, and the Fall. CDRT is located on 175 acres and has a one-mile dirt track, a 7/8-mile turf track, a stabling area, and provides seating for approximately 60,000 guests. The saddling paddock and the stable area has barns sufficient to accommodate 1,400 horses and a 114-room dormitory for backstretch personnel. CDRT also has a year-round simulcast wagering facility. www.ChurchillDowns.com.

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